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[From The Atlanta Constitution, Monday, Nov. 25, 1901.]

What Senator Bacon Saw in the Philippine Islands

Natives Desire Independence Above All Things and They Will Never be Content Until They have Obtained It.

You are earnestly asked to hand this after reading to some other person who will also give it careful consideration.

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What Senator Bacon saw in the Philippine Islands

Washington, November 24.—(Special.)—Senator Bacon, of Georgia, arrived in Washington yesterday, from the Philippines and the Far East, and will be in Atlanta on Monday.

TALKS ABOUT THE TOUR.

In talking with the Constitution's representative today, he said:

"It is not necessary for me to say anything to the Constitution about the different points at which we touched on our trip out to Manila nor to tell all we saw at those places, for this has been covered so fully in the very interesting letters written by the Constitution's representative, Jos. Ohl, who went out with us. We saw much that was both instructive and amusing, for we touched many lands and were with many different peoples.

"With regard to the Philippines, it is next to impossible to give within the confines of a newspaper interview any adequate summary of the impressions gained during the more than a month I devoted to a study of the islands and

their people. It is a great big subject. I spent some time in Manila, which is the metropolis of the Philippines, and I think I gained much valuable information there, but in some respects the most valuable portion of my stay in the Philippines was that devoted to a tour of the islands, which gave me an insight into the different parts of the archipelago and the different people who comprise its population. We went down as far as Jolo, which is the capital of the Sulu group, and is almost down to Borneo. We saw the principal Visayan islands, which form a very important section of the group, and had excellent opportunities of getting an insight into the conditions as they are now.

"For one thing," continued Senator Bacon, "I realize that the task we have undertaken in the Philippines is many times greater and many times more serious than I thought before I went there. It is extremely difficult for anybody to realize the magnitude of this task who has not been down there and who has not come in actual contact with the islands and the people. It was the belief that this was so that inspired me with the desire to visit the islands and I am more than glad I availed myself of the opportunity which presented itself. I do not know whether it will be possible to impress the people of the United States with a realization of the actual conditions, for, as I have said, nobody who has not been there can understand these as well as one who has.

"I have been greatly disappointed to have had to come to the conclusion that the people of the Philippines are unfriendly to the Americans. With them

the sentiment of nationality is undoubtedly strong. Even those who for business reasons protest loyalty are not friendly to American sovereignty, but have in their hearts the desire for nationality I do not believe there will be a time for a generation at least when this sentiment will change, and I am convinced that we will have to keep a very large army there for an indefinite period.

"My conclusions have been drawn from the testimony of army officers, officials of the civil government and from interviews with the leading natives who protest friendship for the American government. The conclusion to be drawn from this testimony—the only conclusion that can be drawn from it—is that the Filipinos feel they are entitled to nationality: that they desire beyond all things a brown man's government.

GOVERNMENT OF THE FILIPINOS.

"There are but two ways in which we can govern the islands," continued Senator Bacon. "These are either absolute military rule on the one hand, or such a liberal government as will satisfy the people on the other; there can be no half way business.

"As for the Filipino people themselves, I found them distinctly superior to what I had expected. I believe this would be the conclusion of every fair man who was brought in contact with them. Since I left Washington I have been brought in touch with many brown races and I do not hesitate to say that I consider the Filipinos equal to any and superior to most in point of character and mental ability. They labor under the handicap of a tropical climate and, therefore, are

not so vigorous physically or as industrious as the Chinese or the Japanese, for instance, and this must be taken into account in dealing with them; but as I have said, I am convinced that they are the equals of any in point of character and ability.

"With regard to the climate, we were there at the most favorable time, just at the close of the rainy season, when the southwest monsoon was blowing continuously, and so long as a person was in the breeze he could be reasonably comfortable, but once out of the breeze, even if he was in the shade, he would find it very unpleasant, for he would perspire profusely and would feel as if liable to being overcome with the heat. The country, taken as a whole, is in this regard like all other countries in the tropics and near the water.

"There has been no revival of the business enterprises of the islands such as I expected to see. That this is the case—that there has been no return to the conditions which existed before the war—was admitted on all sides. Nevertheless there has been quite a boom in Manila on account of the large amount of money being spent there as the result of American occupation. The same amount of money spent by the government in any American city would give it a great boom. Manila is being benefited by the large expenditure of money for which the American people have to foot the bills. Whether there is any chance of its being a paying movement is something that the people will, I think, consider pretty carefully.

"I am convinced that we have voluntarily undertaken the most difficult and

most expensive problem that has ever fallen to the United States government; that it will involve a vast amount of labor, expense and trouble of all kinds before we work it out. What the end will be, no man can tell.

"I gave the most careful study of the situation in all its bearings that I could, seeking information from every possible source that I thought could throw light on the subject. For a week I was the guest of Governor Taft at his home in Manila and from him and from other officials of the civil government I got the view of the situation held by the civil government; in my travels through the islands I was thrown with army officers of all ranks, many of whom had seen long service in the islands, and from them I got the army view; then whenever it was possible I had talks with prominent Filipinos who talked freely as a rule, and from them in this way I got the opinions of the men upon whom we must, in a great measure, rely for the working out of the great problem of winning the friendship of the people. From what these men—civil officials, military officers and leading Filipinos—told me and from what I saw with my own eyes, I have secured information in a general way which I trust may be of some assistance in the effort of congress to deal with the Philippine problem.

"In my opinion the Philippine question must, to a very great extent at least, cease to be political in its character, but it is bound to be for a long time to come a very serious business and public question with which congress must deal. I do not believe that the United States government, or the people of the United

States in their private capacities, will ever get back one-tenth of the money that has been spent and will have to be spent in working out the problem, and I find this the very general opinion of army officers on the islands who are most familiar with the conditions there and with the material resources of the country."

AS TO AGUINALDO.

"Did you see Aguinaldo?"

"No. I did not. Although the house in which he is held a prisoner is in the same block with Governor Taft's residence, where I stayed, and although I had plenty of opportunities to see him, I did not think from my interview with the leading Filipinos whom I had met that Aguinaldo now cuts much figure. I came to the conclusion that, to a large extent at least, his influence is gone and I did not think anything that he could say to me would be of any real consequence. Then, in addition to this, I saw no good purpose in interviewing him, for I did not go to the Philippine islands with an idea of harking back to the past or of listening to the grievances of Filipino military leaders, no matter how much they claim to have been badly treated by our people. I went to the islands for the purpose of getting in touch with the present conditions with a view to an understanding of what is best to do for the present and the future. In other words, I could see no good in wasting time in dealing with those questions of the past when there are so much larger questions of the present and the future.

"I made it a rule to avoid newspaper

interviews and speeches as much as possible. The only speech I made was upon an occasion when I thought it well to impress upon the Filipino leaders that it will be impossible to do anything for the people so long as there is armed opposition to the American forces. I felt that it was necessary for these men who were leaders among the people to understand that their friends in America, those who wish best for them, could do nothing so long as this armed opposition exists.

"With regard to what is called the civil government I would like to say that I do not know of a better man in the United States of either political party for its head than Governor Taft. He is a man of first class ability, fine address, of unquestioned integrity, is very industrious and painstaking, and thoroughly devoted to the work he has undertaken. He realizes the difficulties of the task he has on hand, and no man looking into the situation could help realizing it. When I said good-by to him, I wished him 'good luck' and remarked incidentally that he would need every bit of that commodity in solving the difficulties of his task."

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